

bers of the glorious mystical body of Christ. They are still our brethren, and are still capable of participating in the merits acquired by the good works of their fellow-members. We are in that state in which our good works are meritorious. By them we merit for ourselves and by them we acquire merits which if our charity do but move us we may apply to the relief of those who need them and who may not gain them for themselves.

These dear souls know this as well or better than we do, and is it possible that they do not look lovingly and yearningly to us, hoping that some good angel may move us to think of them and to do something that may relieve them the sooner from their probation? Can we imagine the gratitude with which they accept even the smallest favor of this kind we may have to offer them?

For us what we would give them is a mere nothing. A prayer, an ejaculation, a kind word, a penny given in charity. Above all a Mass offered for their benefit may mean an untold relief to them. They know and appreciate much better than we do what it is to be separated from God and, anything that may hasten, be it ever so little, the end of that separation must be to them a boon beyond price.

This power of communicating merits is one of the most beautiful and consoling doctrines of our holy faith. It robs death of its bitterness, because it robs it of its power of separating loved ones from one another. We are nearer in fact to our lost loved ones than we are to those who are still left to us in this world. We can do more for the good and well being of our dead than for those of our living friends; and if a selfish motive be permitted, the good we do them after death cannot fail of appreciation and shall surely be repaid a thousand-fold in gratitude, while we know too well how often our charity

towards the living is met with heart-breaking unthankfulness.

These, my dear brethren, are some of the thoughts suggested to us by the solemnities of the coming week. They should serve to make us look forward with hope and courage to that moment which awaits us all. They should make death seem to us not a horrid enemy who seeks our destruction, but a kind friend, who stands ready to open to us a beautiful future in which we shall find peace and rest and all joy. And especially should they at this time inflame anew our charity and move us to offer to God the merits of our good deeds with the supplication that He may deign to apply them to the relief of those faithful souls who have gone before us, but who yet await the dawn of their eternal day.

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"Do you wish to soothe and release the dead? Say your Rosary continually. It is the golden chain which binds earth to purgatory, and both to heaven. It is the mysterious ladder of Jacob erected by the hands of Mary between the place of expiation and paradise. The Ave Maria of the beads resounds like a benediction in the abode of the sufferers, and strikes a jubilant chord in the midst of the sad concert of groans, sighs, and incessant aspirations towards eternal happiness."

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Angels' hands have been about you from the waters of Holy Baptism. Their guidance, unseen, unfelt, has drawn you again and again from ills which your hearts had chosen. In seasons of weakness they have stayed you up; in the hour of wavering they have kept you from falling. —*Cardinal Manning.*

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Let what will happen, let things look as they may, I bow my head, and submit myself as a child to Him who rules us.